



ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF AREA AGENCIES ON AGING

3100 Montvale Drive, Springfield, IL 62704-4278, Phone: 217.787.9234; Fax: 217.787.6290

Testimony

For the

Illinois Human Services Commission

Public Hearing

September 13, 2011

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Waubonsee Community College

Room 160 AC

Presented by Lucia West Jones, CEO

Northeastern IL Agency on Aging

P.O. Box 809, Kankakee 60901

1-800-528-2000

On Behalf of the IL Association of Area Agencies on Aging (I4A)



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Good afternoon, Mr./Madame Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is **Lucia West Jones**, the Executive Director of the Northeastern IL Agency on Aging. I am speaking on behalf of the Illinois Association of Area Agencies on Aging. **IAA represents** the thirteen Area Agencies on Aging, serving older adults and family caregivers in partnership with the Illinois Department on Aging. We support a **network of 259 community agencies and 84 nutrition projects serving over 512,000 older adults annually – one in four Illinois Seniors**. The following is our current assessment of the impact of the cuts made in the FY2012 Illinois State Budget on statewide and community-based programs serving older adults:

1. **An estimated 43,000 older and disabled adults have been terminated from Illinois Cares Rx** due to a lowering of the income eligibility threshold to 200% of the federal poverty level effective September 1, 2011. These individuals need help paying monthly premiums, annual deductibles, affordable co-payments, and co-payments in the dough-nut hole under their Medicare Part D plans. And, co-payments will double for those still eligible for the program. These individuals may not be able to purchase medications needed to manage chronic health conditions, resulting in increased hospitalizations, nursing home admissions, and possible deaths. Area Agencies on Aging and local Senior Health Assistance Programs and SHIP counselors are advising them about their options, helping them select a more affordable Medicare Part D prescription drug plan, contacting their physician to request alternative generic drugs, seeking discounts on prescription drugs offered by retail pharmacies, and working with their physicians to apply for patient assistance programs offered by pharmaceutical manufacturers.
2. **The FY2012 State Budget cut \$836,262 (20.8%) in funding for Community-Based Services, \$466,200 (20.8%) in Planning and Service Grants to Area Agencies on Aging, and \$944,600 (9.47% for Home Delivered Meals**. These cuts will have the following impact:
 - **2,873 fewer older persons will be provided meals** during State Fiscal Year 2012 because of state funding cuts in home delivered meals (444,618 meals)
 - **3,913 fewer older persons will receive assisted, emergency or transportation services**. Special transportation programs that assist older persons from their doorway to the vehicle and to the doorway of their destination will be impacted. Others will not receive transportation to health care appointments, essential shopping and service destinations.
 - **22,925 fewer older persons will receive information, assistance and benefits counseling** from the aging network.
 - **1,972 fewer older persons will receive such services as medication management, legal assistance, in-home care, telephone assurance, senior center, gap-filling services, housing assistance, limited English speaking services, respite and small repairs essential to assist people remain in their homes**.

We must restore these cuts to maintain a strong and stable foundation of community services and supports for our most vulnerable older adults.

I4A provides the following input for the Budgeting for Results process:

- I4A recommends that the State of Illinois restore cuts in state grants to Area Agencies on Aging for Community-Based Services and Home Delivered Meals. These services provide a favorable return on the State's investment in several ways, but the most striking example is home delivered meals. **Home delivered meals** are a life-line for 47,000 homebound older adults, who rely on them for most of their daily nutritional requirements and their need for daily social contact. Home Delivered Meals enable older adults to live at home for as long as possible and prevent the need for most costly long-term care. **The cost to the state of providing an older adult with one meal a day for an average of 250 serving days per year is \$329, compared to state expenditures of \$10,693 per year for the average Community Care Program client, and \$44,000 for a Medicaid-eligible resident of a nursing home.**
- Coordinated Points of Entry provide Information & Assistance and conduct eligibility screenings of older adults for variety of public and private benefits and help them find and complete applications for affordable Medicare Part D plans, federal Low-Income Subsidies, Medicare Assistance Programs, and other benefits; and provide them with options counseling about community-based services and supports that will enable them to manage multiple chronic health conditions at home.
- Community-based paratransit services in metropolitan areas and rural public transportation programs enable older and disabled individuals to access preventive health care and rehabilitative services, which prevents costly readmissions to hospitals and admissions to long-term care facilities. State grants to Area Agencies on Aging help to make rides more affordable for older adults in greatest need.
- Area Agencies on Aging embed evidence-based practices into community-based services such as the Chronic Disease Self Management Program and exercise programs to empower older adults to manage chronic disease and disability at home, prevent falls and costly trips to the ER and rehabilitative stays in long-term care facilities, effectively reducing Medicare and Medicaid expenditures.
- **Community-Based Services administered by Area Agencies on Aging leverage over \$46 million in federal Older Americans Act funds, \$7 million in federal Nutrition Incentive Program Funds, over \$24 million in local cash and in-kind support, and over \$13 million in voluntary contributions from older adults participating in senior services annually. Community-based services are a wise investment!**